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Twenty-eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
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Draft report

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Consideration of topics by working groups

Issue (d): Awareness-raising on drug-related issues in educational settings

1. The working group held one meeting on 19 September 2018. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Many countries mentioned the adoption and implementation of national drug master plans, policies and strategies that guide the balanced approach to drug control in their respective countries and that are inclusive of prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues;

(b) Several countries underlined the multi-sectoral implementation of sensitization and public awareness-raising campaigns, including by using the Internet, social media and other initiatives. Targeted information, education and communication materials were developed and disseminated through various channels, including youth and drug-free clubs;

(c) Drug prevention interventions through school curricula integration were emphasised as a sustainable and integrated manner to scale-up school-based drug prevention programmes.

2. The working group drew up the following conclusions:

(a) Programmatic research and prevalence surveys have been undertaken in the region, however there is still paucity in data on programme effectiveness and epidemiological trends in the region;

(b) While progress was made in the implementation of prevention initiatives and programmes, there is a need to scale-up evidence-based drug prevention programmes in all settings and at all stages of development, from infancy to early adulthood, mindful of the needs of children and youth at risk or from marginalised communities;

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(c) While the focus of the working group was addressing awareness-raising on drug-related issues in educational settings, greater attention to family skills programmes was identified as a priority intervention requiring greater investment;

(d) An integrated partnership approach to planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of programmes that are inclusive of all relevant sectors (e.g. education, health, social welfare, youth, labour, law enforcement, etc.), at all levels (e.g. national, sub-national and local) and engaging a range of implementers and stakeholders (e.g. government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community and religious leaders, universities, research institutions and the private sector) is key to effective prevention programmes.

3. The working group adopted the following recommendations with regard to activities and programmes on awareness-raising on drug-related issues in educational settings:

(a) Understanding that programmes need to address all development stages and be conducted in multiple settings to have an impact on preventing drug use and drug use disorders, Governments are encouraged to develop and implement effective drug prevention systems that include supportive legal and policy frameworks, scientific evidence and research, coordination mechanisms of multiple sectors and levels, capacity-building of policymakers and practitioners and allocation of adequate resources to sustain the system on the long term;

(b) Acknowledging that the objective of drug prevention is to help young people to avoid or delay initiation into the use of drugs and to avoid developing disorders, Governments are encouraged to scale-up availability, coverage and quality of scientific evidence-based prevention activities and programmes in all relevant settings, including schools, in line with the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly;

(c) Governments are encouraged to enhance the gathering of gender and age-disaggregated drug use data and evidence of the impact of drug use prevention programmes to ensure the drug prevention programmes implemented are effective and fit for purpose.

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